

## What are FOIA exemptions?



Not all records are required to be released under the FOIA. Congress established nine exemptions from disclosure for certain categories of information to protect against certain harms, such as an invasion of personal privacy, or harm to law enforcement investigations. The FOIA authorizes agencies to withhold information when they reasonably foresee that disclosure would harm an interest protected by one of these nine exemptions.

The nine exemptions are described below.

**Exemption 1:** Information that is classified to protect national security.

**Exemption 2:** Information related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency.

**Exemption 3:** Information that is prohibited from disclosure by another federal law.

**Exemption 4:** Trade secrets or commercial or financial information that is confidential or privileged.

**Exemption 5:** Privileged communications within or between agencies, including those protected by the:

1. Deliberative Process Privilege (provided the records were created less than 25 years before the date on which they were requested)
2. Attorney-Work Product Privilege
3. Attorney-Client Privilege

**Exemption 6:** Information that, if disclosed, would invade another individual's personal privacy.

**Exemption 7:** Information compiled for law enforcement purposes that:

- 7(A). Could reasonably be expected to interfere with enforcement proceedings
- 7(B). Would deprive a person of a right to a fair trial or an impartial adjudication
- 7(C). Could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy

- 7(D). Could reasonably be expected to disclose the identity of a confidential source
- 7(E). Would disclose techniques and procedures for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions, or would disclose guidelines for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions if such disclosure could reasonably be expected to risk circumvention of the law
- 7(F). Could reasonably be expected to endanger the life or physical safety of any individual

**Exemption 8:** Information that concerns the supervision of financial institutions.

**Exemption 9:** Geological information on wells.

**What are exclusions?**

**How do I file an administrative appeal?**

**What is the Office of Government Information Services?**

**What is the Presumption of Openness and Who Issues Guidance to Agencies on the FOIA?**



FOIA.gov

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